

LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM

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COVER: Figured Silk, satin weave  
Seljuk, 13th or 14th Century  
Los Angeles County Museum Purchase

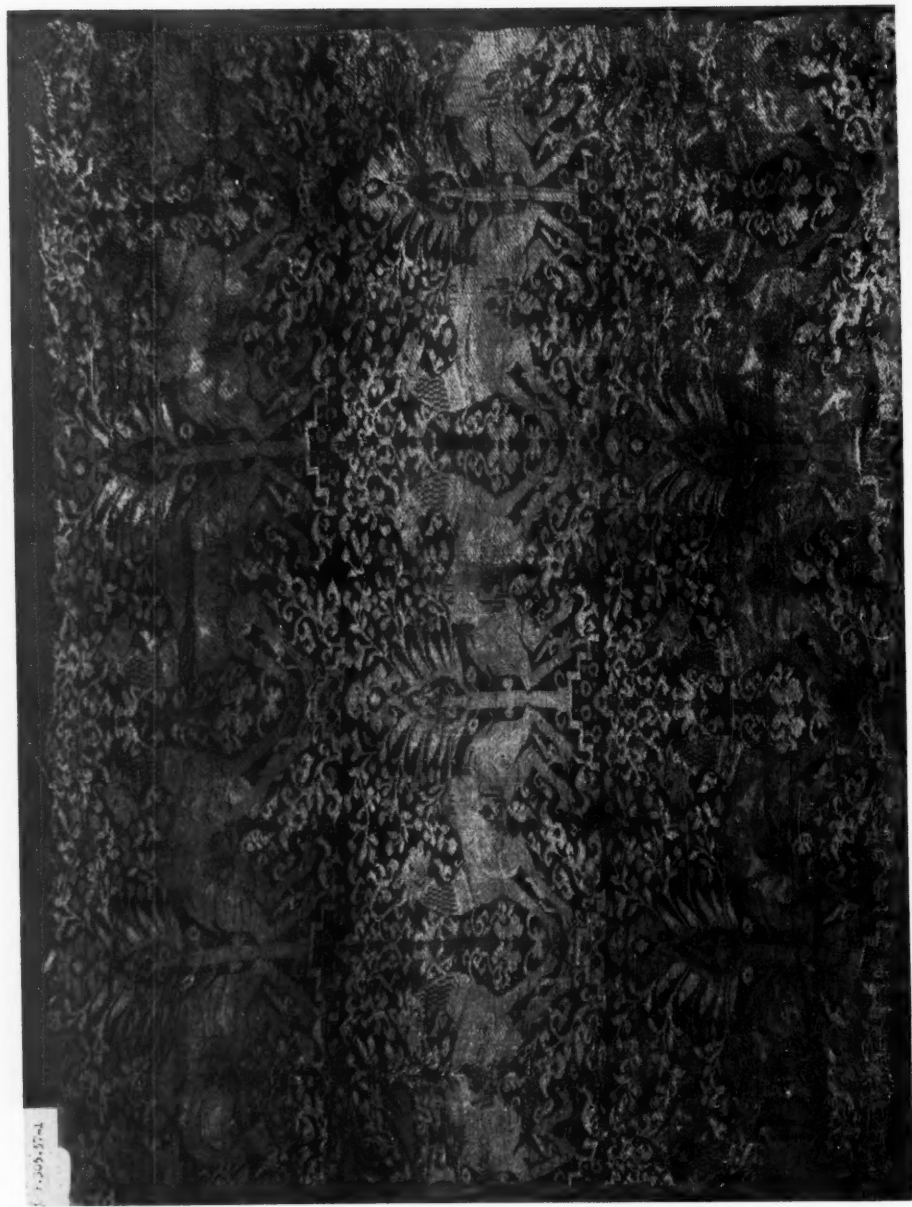


FIG. 1. Figured Silk, satin weave. Dark green and gold-yellow. Design of pairs of camels *regardant*, divided by conventionalized tree. Some Kufic lettering on the camels' flanks.  
Size, 10 x 14½ inches. Repeats 6¾ inches. Seljuk, 13th or 14th century.  
Museum Purchase, P.305.57-1.

## Woven Treasures of Persian Art

In the course of many centuries the peoples of the Iranian plateau, who may be called with some license Persians, had produced remarkably fine, and often superb works of art in many fields. Persians take credit for immortal literary achievements, brilliant illuminated manuscripts, graceful sculpture, excellent bronzes, beautiful pottery and ceramics, elegant jewelry and other accessories of personal adornment and horse-trapping, luxurious carpets and exquisite fabrics.

Products of Persian culture can be traced back thousands of years. Arthur U. Pope, one of the highest authorities on this subject states (in his Introduction to *Guide to the Exhibition of Persian Art*, New York, 1940): "Artistic feeling and capacity, there is reason to believe, emerged in Iran before the fifth millenium B.C. . . . for fifty centuries Iran continued to produce works of art of notable excellence in all media."

Decorative objects of artistic significance make their appearance under the Sassanian dynasty (A.D. 226-640) but the skill of craftsmen reached its greatest heights under the Seljuk dynasty (A.D. 1037-1258) and continued to present to the world art treasures of unexcelled beauty and interest during the reign of the Safavids (A.D. 1499-1736).

Such supreme performance could be achieved only through the appreciative and generous patronage of the splendor-loving rulers of the Iranian people, the kings, the caliphs, the khans, and shahs. Colonies of workshops were built within the grounds of the royal palaces. The artists and craftsmen

received liberal stipends. Free from worldly worries, they were able to devote their time, inventive talents and patient workmanship to their tasks. It does not take an expert to realize the enormity of the amount of exacting and painstaking work that went into each textile with delicately woven design.

The royal sponsors surrounded themselves with pomp and ornamentation of the most luxurious kind. The elements of interior decoration of their palaces and tents consisted mainly of sumptuous rugs, carpets, hangings, curtains and covers, and their clothing was made of the finest of brocaded, embroidered or otherwise embellished silks.

The silk yarn was imported from China, and its use was a royal monopoly for a long time.

When rulers, nobles and war-lords embarked on a hostile campaign, a friendly visit or a hunting expedition, they carried with them their luxurious tents, which were little less than portable palaces ornamented with splendid rugs and hangings and other woven decorative devices.

As required by the dictates of oriental courtesy, visiting potentates and diplomatic representatives from other courts used to exchange precious gifts with their royal hosts. In this way many excellent silken cloths came into the possession of distinguished Europeans. Many such examples of Persian artistry were bought by travellers, and many exported through the channels of normal commerce.

As time went on these silks were gradually dispersed, and found their way into museums, private collections, and galleries of art dealers. The dispersal still goes on, although at a very slow rate, and every now and then a yet unknown specimen appears in a collection or on the art market.

Extensive literature deals with the history, description and analysis of Persian textiles. It is indisputably clear that they constitute a separate group of unique fabrics of unequalled artistic beauty. This quality, and the fact that many of them were princely gifts, explain why they were carefully preserved,

although many must have fallen victim to the destructive effects of age and climate, or disasters of warfare.

The known existing specimens—ranging from pieces of impressive dimensions to small fragments—were studiously examined, analysed, sorted into categories, catalogued, described and illustrated in many works of reference, and their history and technical data published in minute detail. Treatises describing the individual pieces point out the delicacy and gracefulness of design, harmony of composition, the inexhaustible inventiveness and exquisite taste of the designers, and the masterly skill of the executive weavers.

The attention of art experts to ancient Persian fabrics had gained powerful impetus with the purely accidental discovery in 1925 of a number of aged and exquisite silk cloths in the funeral chambers under the ruins of a centuries old royal tomb at Bibi Shahr Banu near Rayy (or Raiy, now Rhages), a one-time capital city of the Seljuks, and a center of trade and industry, a short distance south-east of Teheran.

This most fortunate discovery was immediately followed by a raid by unskilled and unauthorized persons in whose hands the precious fabrics disappeared. Gradually, however, they came to light again, mostly on the art market of Paris. Twenty-one of them were exhibited at Burlington House in London in 1931. Soon, seven more were rediscovered, and displayed at the Leningrad Persian Exhibition in 1935. By 1937, when the textile section of that great monograph, Pope's *A Survey of Persian Art* was completed, fifty-two various specimens, apart from plain tissues, were accounted for. In 1940 three more had turned up. Twenty-odd of these treasures are now at the Textile Museum in Washington, D.C., and about the same number at the Hobart Moore Memorial Collection of Yale University.

It has been established that most of these silks were of Persian origin, woven during the Seljuk period, in the 11th, 12th and/or 13th centuries. We are assured that these fabrics are in every respect the finest mate-

rials that ever came off the loom. The artistry is delightful, competent and striking, and the weaving technique is admirably perfect. Authorities emphasize the elegance and balance of the composition, tasteful choice of colors and their harmony, the precision and uniformity of the weave, which testify to the extraordinary giftedness of the designing and the executive artists.

Dr. Phyllis Ackerman, assistant editor to Arthur U. Pope in the *Survey*, herself one of the leading experts on Persian art, summarizes (in her article on Seljuk Textiles in the *Guide to the Exhibition of Persian Art*, New York, 1940) the views of many specialists on Seljuk fabrics, as "technically and artistically the greatest ones the world has ever seen." She praises their exquisitely accurate rendering, subtly designed calligraphy, intricacy of design and delicacy.

The invaluable finds at Rhages had been studied and scrutinized by most experts on Oriental textiles. They opened a new vista in the evaluation of Persian tissues. Among the many enthusiastic appreciations of their importance and worth we find a discordant note in the writings of Phyllis Ackerman, a most learned and dependable critic. She observes that the discovery was made without scientific supervision, and mentions only thirty-odd silks. Nine of these she assigns to Byzantine origin, and seven or eight to Iraq or Syria. "The remaining twenty-odd pieces . . . represent the Seldjuk textile art of Iran," she stated in her treatise, *Seldjuk and Safavid Textiles in the Bulletin of the American Institute for Iranian Art and Archeology*.

In the *Survey* she expresses her opinion that many textiles which had appeared on the European market shortly after the discoveries near Rhages, and were therefore associated with those finds, were actually of some different provenance, and "even those that certainly did come from there cannot be assumed to be Persian without further examination, since some of the material is certainly foreign" (quoted Gaston Wiet in his *Soieries Persanes*, Cairo, 1948).

On the other hand, Arthur U. Pope states



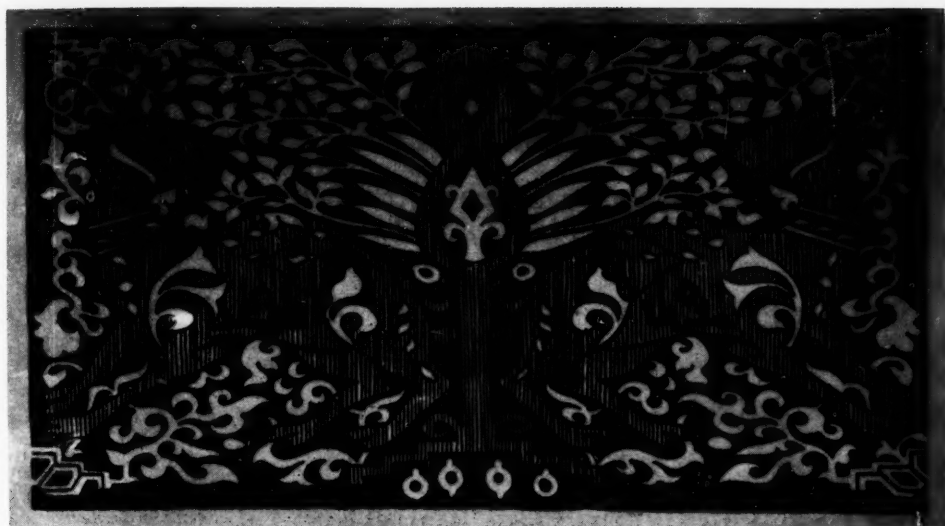


FIG. 2. Artist's reconstruction of design shown in Fig. 1.

in his *An Introduction to Persian Art*, London, 1930 (pp. 148-9): "... the materials recovered from the graves at Rhages prove that once more Persian designers and weavers had attained one of the highest levels in the history of the art."

Be it as it may, it is now generally accepted that textiles with designs in unmistakable, characteristic Persian style and spirit, woven with techniques known to be peculiar to Persian workmanship, rightly belong to the classification of Persian fabrics, whether produced by imported craftsmen, or woven in Persian territories which were later separated from Persia, or made by Persian weavers in nearby countries.

The fact is that leading authorities and most of the many serious students of this subject treat such textiles as products of Persian art and workmanship, allowing for the possibility that several of them may have come from lands which were known at times as Byzantium, Mesopotamia, Palestine, Armenia or Syria.

Our collection contains twenty-nine Persian fabrics, some of them of considerable importance, and most of them beyond any

doubt as to their authenticity. These appear in illustrations, and were described in publications in minute detail with historical information.

One of our specimens to which we attribute particular significance is a fine example of compound *échelonné satin* showing a remarkably well-composed design of confronted camels regardant against a background of formalized trees and foliage and shrubs (Fig. 1 and cover). Some authors have identified these animals as gazelles, llamas and antelopes. The heads resemble camel heads, and the humps were always associated with camels, but the lower extremities, which are not as gracefully and strongly drawn as the rest, do not remind us of a camel.

These beasts appear to wear ornamental collars covering the entire length of their necks, and on their flanks is a small inscription in Kufic which was read by Gaston Wiet as *Ya Rahim*, translated first into French as *O miséricordieux*, and then into English as *O, Compassionate One*, evidently an invocation to a higher being to whom the silk was dedicated.

The inscription is, as in most inscribed Persian fabrics, part of the figural design, and, as is the case with most of these textiles, the pattern is reversed in the adjoining repeats. Thus the inscription appears back-to-front in alternating repeats. It would be perplexing to us to see words of our language written as if they were seen in a mirror, but such peculiarity evidently did not disturb the artists of ancient Persia, nor the few scholars who were able to read.

Kufic characters were largely used in calligraphy on textiles and other media. They were evolved by a famous Moslem school at Kufa, Mesopotamia, towards the end of the 7th century A.D. It is a beautiful, monumental script which lends itself to stylization. The characters being bold, upright and mainly angular were most suitable for carving and engraving into stone and metal, and weaving into cloth; less suitable for writing with a brush. A variant of Kufic was the Naskhi script with rounded, current characters which had gradually developed into the cursive Arabic script, eminently suitable for writing on papyrus. For this reason it came into general use, and, in its modern form, is used by the Arab world today. However, Kufic was employed for a long time for ornamental inscriptions. (David Diringer, *The Alphabet*, Philosophical Library, New York, ca. 1948, p. 271.)

Pope remarks in his *An Introduction to Persian Art*, p. 103, "Under the Seljuks the graceful and flowing styles which were revived from an earlier tradition, as well as introduced from new sources, moulded the stern Kufic into more gracious and fluid forms, and we have the beginning of the Naskhi script, in which the flexibility of pen and brush tip dictates the shape and finish of each stroke."

The inclusion of decorative inscriptions in the weave of Persian fabrics is a frequently seen characteristic. For this reason we are particularly interested in their systems of writing and in the fascinating calligraphy which was a highly respected art in Persia, as in China and other Asiatic countries. Cal-

ligraphers occupied a distinguished position in the esteem of cultured society. It was their task to embellish the elements of regular script, much the same way as today's sign-writers elaborate on our Latin alphabet, sometimes to the extreme limit of recognition.

The weave, though simple, is characteristic of the techniques used in the establishments of Persia in Islamic times. The cloth is a twill of green warp, and weft of other colors. The warp threads are thin and stringy, while the weft is of fine silk, presenting a handsome, satin appearance. Phyllis Ackerman (in her chapter on Islamic Textiles, No. 55 in the *Survey*, Vol. II, p. 2041) gives further particulars: "The warp is floated over four wefts, and the underpass is regularly spaced, skipping one. The pattern wefts are bound in *échelon* with a secondary white warp that occurs after every four main warps."

The same authority describes the colors as blue ground with a pattern in white (now cream colour) and red (? faded). To us the ground appears as a dark bluish green and the pattern as two shades of cream, one of which may have been red originally.

The pattern is arranged, as in most textiles of this group, in horizontal rows, repeating alternately in reverse. The silk cloth of which we have a specimen was woven in a width averaging thirty inches. This width accommodates five pairs, i.e. ten camels in each row of approximately 3¼ inches in depth. In the alternating rows the camels facing one way alternate with camels facing the opposite direction.

A specimen of the same material, measuring 7½ x 30 inches, showing both selvages, is in the possession of the Detroit Institute of Arts, described by the former Curator Adèle Coulin Weibel, in her treatise on Seljuk Fabrics, in the *Bulletin* of that Museum, Vol. XV, No. 3, December 1935, p. 41 and also in her excellent book, *Two Thousand Years of Textiles*, p. 115, No. 120, where she classifies it as Fancy Satin. Another piece of the same silk is in the H. A. Elsberg Collection in New York, described in the *Survey*, Vol. III, pp. 2022-23, Fig. 656b, and pp. 2192-93.



The Victoria and Albert Museum also has a fine specimen (T. 95-1937) of the same fabric.

This textile belongs to the type of fabrics called *cendal* which is a fine, lightweight, sumptuous kind of silk tissue. The other of the two principal types, an equally excellent but heavier fabric, is known as *exametum* or *samit* (possibly the origin of the German word *Sammet* or *Sammt*, meaning velvet).

The Rhages silks were first exhibited, as we mentioned before, in London, in 1931—six years after their discovery; they were next on display in Leningrad, in 1935. New York saw them at the Exhibition of Persian Art, presented by the Iranian Institute in 1940.

One of our exhibitions also included several Rhages textiles, in 1946.

Our silk, illustrated on these pages, has been published and described in works of reference, and its beauty and significance has been appropriately extolled. We have chosen it for the subject of this sketchy dissertation because it seemed to us that it reveals, perhaps more than the other twenty-eight examples of Persian fabrics in our collection, the subtlety and complexity of composition, the refinement of taste, and the virtuosity of technique, of the artists and master craftsmen of a virile people in their golden era of culture.

EUGENE I. HOLT

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## Recent Purchases of North Italian Drawings

The categorization of the North Italian school, referring to the areas from Lombardy to the Veneto, comprises a larger sector than we are including in the present discussion of new drawings. A closer categorization would be "Emilian," but as one, if not two, of the drawings are Venetian we retain the classification, omitting the province of Lombardy through the absence as yet of drawings pertaining to that school.

The term, North Italian, as a geographical and stylistic category, was more obtainable in the earlier Renaissance than at a later period, such as the Seicento, when as a result of greater travelling by artists, and mingling of influences, strict regional distinctiveness could not always so surely be found.

The earliest drawing in our present group is the *Madonna and Child with S. Elizabeth and Infant S. John*<sup>1</sup> by Andrea Meldolla, called Schiavone, 1522-ca. 1563 (Fig. 1). Not much studied in the English literature, and an "uncertain" figure still, Andrea Schiavone is chiefly associated with Parmigianino, whose pupil he is held to have been, and whose style he generally followed. Born of Germanic parentage at Zara, on the Dalmatian coast, he worked largely in Venice as a painter, but was also active in translating drawings and prints by Parmigianino into etchings. As a painter he was highly esteemed by Tintoretto, especially for his color.

Our drawing is characteristic of the technique which Schiavone often employed for

this medium, brush on specially prepared, i.e., sized, paper. The striations of the brush in its rapid pigmentation of the paper are particularly sharp and noticeable, these strokes of the original preparation having bled through to the drawing over it. There is evidence of restoration on the neck of the Madonna, the surface of the work shows some wearing and abrading, but is otherwise untouched. Schiavone's drawing method, with its chiaroscuro characteristics, and so close in appearance to the chiaroscuro woodcut, is actually brush painting in wash, without any preliminary sketching; a technique calculated to create brilliant light effects as well as the true volume effects of painting. Linear elements are obliterated in the broad, submerged, and imprecise flowing of contours which marks Schiavone's style, and which is related to his Venetian training. Tintoretto, whose son, Domenico, sometimes carried this style even further, is reported to have said once, with some sarcasm, "We poor Venetians cannot draw but in this manner [with the brush]."<sup>2</sup> In the case of Andrea Schiavone, the technique has led to some confusion with works by Tintoretto himself as well



FIG. 1. Andrea Schiavone, *Madonna and Child with S. Elizabeth and Infant S. John*, Museum Purchase, County Funds.

as with Giuseppe Salviati, and the Bolognese Biagio Pupini.

Our drawing can, in the artist's *œuvre*, be closest compared to his *Adoration of the Shepherds*, in the Rennes Museum, and the *Adoration of the Magi*, in the Royal Library, Turin. The first is a brush, the second a pen drawing. There is a particularly Raphaelesque echo, in the present work, in the intimacy of embrace between S. Elizabeth and S. John, while the posture of the infant Christ is characteristic of Parmigianino in whose work He so often is shown semi-reclining, with marked emphasis on the prominence and position of His long, full limbs. Impressionistic, painterly, our drawing is a characteristic product of the 16th century school of the Veneto. With its Parmigianinesque elements of grace and elegance, of languidly voluptuous forms, it can be assigned to the period between the forties and fifties when the influence of the great Emilian Mannerist was at its maximum, thus making it a fairly early work in Schiavone's catalogue. As the first interesting example of this circle to enter our collection, it is noteworthy in this connection that of the some sixty-nine drawings listed for Schiavone (with many rejections) by the Tietzes,<sup>3</sup> only three were to be found in American collections. Today three other important drawings by the artist have been added to this group by the outstanding collection of János Scholz.

Of major importance is our recent acquisition of a particularly rich double landscape drawing<sup>4</sup> by Annibale Carracci, whose place in the history of landscape is well known. The drawing (Fig. 2) is one to be compared with the beautiful works in the Ellesmere collection, Scotland, which by reason of its holdings in Carracci landscape drawings complements the great repository of figures and compositions at Windsor Castle. The scene on the *recto* is a large view of a distant mountain range, with broad river and boatman in the foreground. The view on the *verso*, Fig. 3, is of a much closer mountainous landscape with towering trees, and a smaller boatman, now seen from the rear, in the im-

mediate foreground. Both sides are inscribed "Tiziano" in an old hand. The collector's mark on the *verso* is illegible.

Our drawing belongs to Annibale's first and pre-Roman period which terminates in 1595 when he was summoned to the capital to enter the service of Cardinal Odoardo Farnese. There, together with his older brother, Agostino, he decorated the Galleria of the Palazzo Farnese, adding to the Sistine Chapel, and the Stanze in the Vatican, the third great Roman source for subsequent European painting. Fresco decoration for two centuries derived from his complex scheme of powerfully illusionistic, interacting effects, and classical imagery. In Rome, too, Annibale attained the first expression of classical landscape in the "heroic" vein, and prescribed the direction for the landscape painting of the 17th century. The Aldobrandini cycle of landscapes, now in the Doria Gallery, by Annibale and his pupil-collaborators, Domenichino and Francesco Albani, was germinal for both contemporary and later landscapists working in Rome. The landscape style out of which Annibale developed was a fusion of the great Venetians, chiefly Titian and Paolo Veronese, with some currents of the more intimate Ferrarese school. But he was, in addition, originally influenced by Niccolò dell'Abbate (1512-1571) who came to Bologna from nearby Modena.

Annibale's early *Roman Landscape*, in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, is clearly in the strain of Niccolò's romantic, picturesque fresco, *Landscape with Ruins* (1550) in the ex-Palazzo Poggi, now University, Bologna. Later, however, the classical influences which he underwent in the capital transformed his initially more "miniaturistic" and picturesque approach into the broadly spaced, serene and monumental compositions which were font and inspiration for Poussin. His landscapes became "heroic" in the sense of greater amplitude and majesty, massiveness of scenery and architecture, the detailed treatment of individual parts giving way to broad integration.

It was Poussin, of all Annibale's heirs,



FIG. 2. Annibale Carracci, *Landscape with Punting Boatman*,  
Museum Purchase, County Funds.

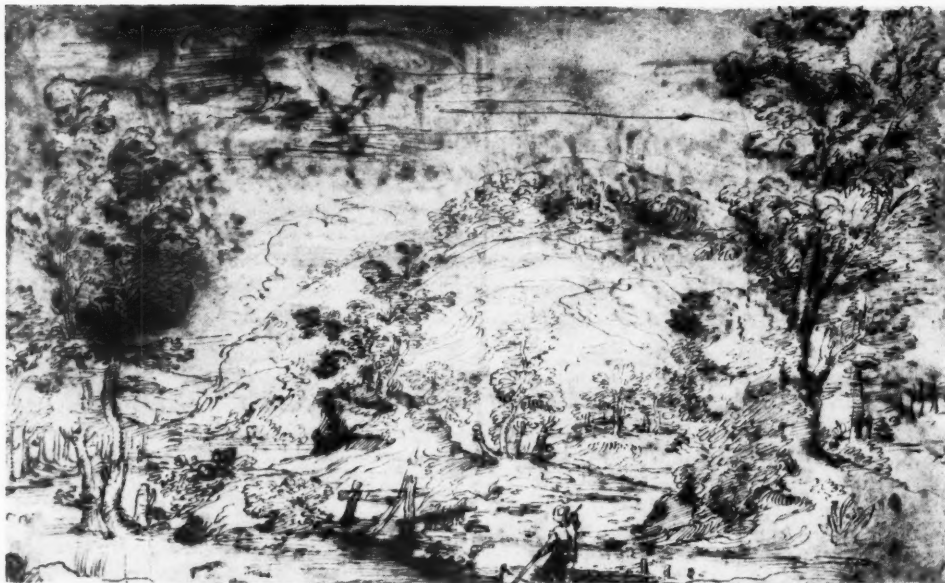


FIG. 3. Annibale Carracci, *Mountainous Landscape with Boatman* (verso of Fig. 2),  
Museum Purchase, County Funds.

who reached the greatest heights in heroic landscape with his architectonic balance and measured symmetry. Although Claude's landscapes are sometimes labelled "heroic," they are better termed "romantic," or "Arcadian," to distinguish their atmospheric poetry from the epic compositions of Poussin. Claude's landscapes stand to Annibale's earlier period as Poussin's to the Bolognese's later landscapes. With these currents there interacted another in the 17th century, the dramatic, theatrical style of Salvator Rosa whose early marines stem from Paul Bril who, with another Northerner, Adam Elsheimer, also added to Annibale's landscape conception in Rome.

Our drawing, with its punting boatman and low cottages at right, points clearly to the Bolognese period when the artist's approach was more rustic, and his landscape peopled with scenes of boating and hunting. Two fine paintings of this type are *The Hunt* and *Fishing*, in the Louvre. For landscape drawings of this period we return to the definitive Ellesmere *Landscape with Jacob Asleep*, signed and dated 1595, the *terminus ad quem* for our work. Parallel are the free, straggly delineated cloud formations, and horizontal sky scratches in both; there also appear, at lower right on the *recto* as well as at lower left on the *verso*, the curved cross marks by which Annibale was wont to represent birds, although this sign appears as well in Agostino.<sup>5</sup> The mountain on our *verso* is similar to that in the *Landscape with Bathers*, in the A. P. Oppé collection, London, likewise given to Annibale's first Bolognese period. In the left middle distance of our *recto*, just behind the post of the carelessly drawn and tilted boat, can be seen radiating lines just as they appear in several of the Ellesmere compositions (Catalogue Nos. 54, 68, and 69). Finally, Annibale's method of sketchily scalloping the contours of foliage in the distance compares clearly in the mid-center of our drawing with the work on the remote hills of the beautiful *verso* of the Ellesmere *Landscape with Jacob Asleep*, the *Landscape with Horseman*.

Our double drawing appears among the freest and most spontaneous of Annibale's landscape studies. It contrasts favorably with his more finished, carefully detailed works, often drawings made directly for landscape paintings. But more: it demonstrates how the previous Venetian conception with its careful hatching and grading of parts, particularly as seen in Titian, was enlarged and loosened by Annibale to become a direct and personal transcription of nature. While the artist was at his most relaxed and casual, as for example in the massing of the cumulus clouds on the *recto*, his instinctive and involuntary interweavings created a rich calligraphy of unstudied lines that provide a "handwriting" of design which makes pure drawing so unique and inimitable.

Bartolomeo Cesi is relatively unknown outside the province of students of Emilian painting.<sup>6</sup> In his day, however, he was a leading artist who painted on occasion with the Carracci, and exerted one of the strongest influences upon the youthful Reni. Born in 1556, he was four years older than Annibale Carracci, and one year the junior of Lodovico whom he outlived by a decade, dying in 1629. Working first in the direction of Pellegrino Tibaldi and Nosadella, classed as a Mannerist,<sup>7</sup> outside the sphere of the Carracci, he was, nonetheless, not without contact with their "reforming" tendencies, as well as those of certain Florentine Mannerists. Another significant influence in his art was the result of a trip to Rome in 1591—four years before Annibale—where the classical currents left an impress upon him he could not conquer or escape.

In the development of its holdings in the North Italian school, the Museum is fortunate to have acquired one of Cesi's drawings (Fig. 4), coincidental with the ever increasing study of the Bolognese, and with perhaps the first public exposure of the artist's work in the recent "Seventeenth Century Emilian Painting" exhibition in Bologna. It is a preliminary study for the outstanding work of his career, the altarpiece of the





FIG. 4. Bartolomeo Cesi, *Madonna and Child in Glory with Kneeling Saints*, Museum Purchase, County Funds.

*Madonna and Child adored by SS. Benedict, John the Baptist and Francis*,<sup>7</sup> in the church of S. Giacomo Maggiore, Bologna, a beautifully balanced composition of rare delicacy and sensitivity.

The altarpiece which was already noted by Malvasia for its fundamental importance in the formation of Guido Reni, represents the Madonna and Child seated among clouds and cherubim while below kneel from left to right S. Benedict, S. John the Baptist and S. Francis (Fig. 5). On the ground before S. Benedict are his mitre and pastoral staff (showing him as Abbot), before S. Francis a book and skull, while S. John holds his crucifix with his left hand and points upward with his right. A landscape is shown in the distance. The clear geometrical pattern of the work is triangular, and the composition is distinctly divided into celestial and terrestrial zones as was the tradition in the Middle Ages. The painting is characterized by the calm, cool harmony associated with Cesi—note the carefully disposed drapery folds of the Baptist, the pattern of S. Francis' cord—so reflected later

in Guido Reni, and by the idealizing devotional spirit and elevated sentiment of the Counter-Reformation.

Our drawing is the identical composition save for several variations natural for a preliminary drawing. Here the position of the Madonna and Child is not as intimate or diagonal as in the painting, and the semi-circle of cherubim behind them is not indicated. The gesture of the Madonna's right hand is changed. S. Benedict is not shown in profile and the same prayerful attitude, and the action of S. John's hands is reversed. The attributes of the two terminal saints are missing, while there is only a faint line in the back which may be a suggestion for the intended hilly landscape. In addition to these figural divergences, the re-drawing with pen over the sanguine shows that the former does not merely follow the first design but alters



FIG. 5. Bartolomeo Cesi, *Madonna and Child in Glory Adored by SS. Benedict, John the Baptist and S. Francis*. Altarpiece, S. Giacomo Maggiore, Bologna (photograph, A. Villani, Bologna).



it.<sup>8</sup> The position of S. Benedict's hands has been changed from the original conception, the greater part of S. Francis' head has not been re-drawn, indication of red chalk drapery folds have not been followed in many places, the ink lines of the Baptist's crucifix do not retrace the original, and the diagonal shading under the upper group has been left untouched as have also the light sketched cherub's heads above.<sup>9</sup> Finally, the spatial relationships of the drawing differ rather substantially from those of the altarpiece, notably that between Baptist and S. Francis, as well as between lower and upper zones.

Cesi's S. Giacomo Maggiore altarpiece is dated around 1595-98<sup>10</sup> on the strength of its influence upon Guido Reni's altarpiece, *Coronation of the Virgin, with Four Saints*, in the Bologna Pinacoteca, believed executed about 1598. Thus it is a work done a few years after the artist's return from Rome. In about roughly the same years, the first in 1594, the other two in 1599 and 1600 respectively, Annibale Carracci painted the altarpieces, *Madonna in Glory*, in the Bologna Pinacoteca, *Madonna in Glory with SS. Francis and Dorothy*, in the Duomo, Spoleto, and the *Christ in Glory*, in the Palazzo Pitti. Their dynamic, exuberant rhythm and movement, their composition of overlapping, curving forms contrast strikingly with Cesi's separated, isocephalous figures in the S. Giacomo altarpiece, perpendicular in their concentrated but static proportionality. From this we may conclude that in addition to Cesi's efforts to "normalize" some of the effects of late Mannerism—despite the gap of almost seventy years, with its necessary changes of conception, it is still arresting to compare his Baptist here with the corresponding figure in Parmigianino's *Vision of S. Girolamo*, 1527, in the National Gallery, London—he was temperamentally more akin to the conservative non-Baroque current of the times, especially as controlled by the sentiments of the Council of Trent. Artistically he might be said to stand in relation to the Carracci as Andrea Sacchi, 1599-1661, the great classical master

of the Roman Baroque, stood to Bernini and Pietro da Cortona.

The drawings by Cesi are found principally in the Uffizi.<sup>11</sup> Some are in the Louvre, a few in the British Museum and Windsor Castle. In the United States a drawing by him of a kneeling *S. Francis* belongs to the collection of János Scholz in New York. A. Graziani also published an early *Annunciation* painting by the artist in a New York private collection.

Our next drawing<sup>12</sup> is of considerable interest in the history and iconography of the subject if no less from the standpoint of attribution (Fig. 6). The subject, *The Sibyl of Tibur pointing out to Augustus*<sup>13</sup> the vision of the *Virgin and Child*, stems from the Middle Ages, appears in illustration for the first time in the *Speculum humanae Salvationis*, and in painting on a wing of the triptych by Jan van Eyck painted in 1440 for the church of S. Martin at Ypres.<sup>14</sup> Twenty years later the subject appears in Rogier van der Weyden's triptych of the Nativity, now in the Berlin Museum.<sup>15</sup> The earliest representation in Italian art is a marble altar of the 12th century, now destroyed.<sup>16</sup> But not until the 16th century does the subject assume the full stride of its popularity in the key painting for its later iconography. This is the altarpiece painted by Baldassare Peruzzi in 1528, after his return from Rome, for the church of Fontegiusta in his native Siena. In this classic representation, with its heroic figure of the Sibyl gesturing compellingly upwards before the overwhelmed Augustus, Parmigianino found the basis for a composition, with some variation, for a chiaroscuro print, cut by his engraver, Antonio da Trento, most likely in Bologna.<sup>17</sup>

Parmigianino's chiaroscuro, which became well known, had, needless to say, widespread influence among the Mannerists of the day.<sup>18</sup> It is in evidence in drawings by Niccolò dell'Abbate,<sup>19</sup> and in a fascinating painting, *The Sibyl of Tibur* of 1580 by Antoine Caron, in the Louvre.<sup>20</sup> Tintoretto's famous "lost" painting of 1550 of the subject for the church



FIG. 6. Venetian or Emilian, late 16th-early 17th century, *The Sibyl of Tibur pointing out to Augustus the Vision of the Virgin and Child*, Museum Purchase, County Funds.

of S. Anna, Venice, is more independent in treatment, the scene laid in pure landscape, with the Sibyl actively pointing out the vision by placing a hand on the kneeling Emperor. Veronese's canvas, in the Museum of Gothenburg, is, conversely, set amid classical architecture, and the composition seems rather to parallel the drawing of *Augustus and the Sibyl*, in the Metropolitan Museum,<sup>21</sup> while the crown on the emperor's knee is a motif which appears most frequently in early 16th century French stained glass.<sup>22</sup> In the outstanding composition of the subject in the 17th century, the painting by Pietro da Cortona, executed for Philip IV of Spain, and now at Hampton Court,<sup>23</sup> the figure of the Sibyl is again close to Parmigianino's, and hence to ours.

Among these enumerated works our drawing is nearest, in its central detail, to Parmigianino's chiaroscuro. The type of bearded Augustus, his hair style, the two attendants behind him who are reduced in size in our drawing to conform to the here kneeling Emperor, and, not least, the figure of the Sibyl

herself, all clearly attest to our draughtsman's close attention to the woodcut. But the radical variation in the drawing, which cannot be found in any of the other treatments, is the military setting of the scene, the many armed soldiers<sup>24</sup> and the encampment which seemingly have no relation to the subject.<sup>25</sup> For drawings of similar background, classical architecture, military tents and soldiers we have to look to certain studies by Sebastiano Ricci, 1659-1734, executed at the time of his influence by Pietro da Cortona, that is, around 1700-1710. Among them is a preliminary drawing, in the Accademia, Venice,<sup>26</sup> for the painting, the *Sacrifice of Polyxena*, at Holyrood House. In the same medium as ours, its heroic forms have the same vivacity and tension as those in our drawing. Another related background is found in Sebastiano's drawing, the *Death of a Hero*, in the Albertina (Catalogue I, No. 241). Although the type of drawing of our massive foreground group is not completely reconcilable with Sebastiano's style, the draughtsmanship of the background figures is in greater accordance with his rapid, aerial manner.

The watermark of our drawing, however, would appear to preclude an attribution as late as to Sebastiano Ricci. A crowned eagle in a circle, corresponding to Briquet Nos. 207 and 209, it pertains to 16th-century Italian paper of large format, but persisted in use in Tuscany until the 18th. The strong Venetian reminiscences, especially of Veronese, in the figure of our Sibyl, would suggest that area most readily as the point of origin for the work, particularly since Parmigianino's influence was so pronounced there. The monumentality of the forms, on the other hand, and the large, bold, if not heavy, drawing do not rule out completely a late 16th-century or early Baroque Emilian, and specifically Bolognese, authorship, as the two Italian compositions of the subject of *Augustus and the Tiburtine Sibyl* that we now know are closest derived from Parmigianino's chiaroscuro are Niccolò dell'Abbate's, and the present work.

The Gandolfi brothers, Ubaldo and Gaetano, represent the last effulgence of the Bolognese school, the latter carrying it to the onset of the 19th century. He has been called the last follower of the Carracci. Gaetano, 1734-1802, was in fact the most eminent Bolognese painter of the second half of the 18th century, and his influence by Tiepolo



FIG. 7. Gaetano Gandolfi, *Christ on the Cross*, Museum Purchase, County Funds.

with whom he studied in his youth in Venice, is clearly evidenced in our final drawing, *Christ on the Cross*,<sup>27</sup> formerly in the Valardi collection, Milan (Fig. 7). Today we may find greater appeal perhaps in Gaetano's drawings than in his canvases since they have a freedom which had a tendency to be lost in his often more academic paintings. The outlines and broad washes of our drawing evoke the large atmospheric freedom and clarity of Tiepolo. The work is closely related to Gaetano's drawing, *The Crucifixion*, in the collection of Giovanni Ceschi, which was exhibited in the extensive *Mostra del Sette-*

*cento*, in Bologna, 1935.<sup>28</sup> The central figure there is exactly like ours except for the billowing of the loin cloth to the left, and the reversed position of the sign on the cross. While four figures surround the cross in the Ceschi drawing, it is here shown on the mound of Calvary, with trees and buildings in the distance.

EBRIA FEINBLATT

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Sepia, brush drawing on prepared dark cream paper, 11" x 8½". Los Angeles County Museum, P. 336.59-7. Ex-collection: Sir Peter Lely. On back of the old mount is inscribed, in addition to the artist's name, the note: A.C. 13. This was the preliminary cataloguing of the large Lely collection in the late 17th century by Roger North, his executor (Lugt 2092).

<sup>2</sup>Carlo Ridolfi, *Le maraviglie dell'arte*, Venice, 1648, II, p. 65.

<sup>3</sup>*The Drawings of the Venetian Painters in the 15th and 16th Centuries*, New York, 1944, pp. 251-254.

<sup>4</sup>Sepia, pen, 9¾" x 16½". Los Angeles County Museum, P. 337.59-1.

<sup>5</sup>Another motif which appears identically in both brothers is that of a flock of birds over a tower.

<sup>6</sup>The definitive article on the artist is A. Graziani, "Bartolomeo Cesi," in *La Critica d'Arte*, 1939, IV, pp. 54-95.

<sup>7</sup>Sepia, pen over red chalk, 9¼" x 7". Los Angeles County Museum, P.334.59-3. Ex-collections: Sir Peter Lely, J. Richardson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, John Barnard, A. M. Champenowne. On the front of the old mount the attribution to Lodovico Carracci, on the back John Barnard's initials, the dimensions of the drawing, and a number, according to his custom of so inscribing all his drawings (Lugt 1420).

<sup>8</sup>This method of "a slow and reflective re-elaboration" of a preliminary drawing is described by Graziani in his discussion of Cesi's method of work. *Op. cit.*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>9</sup>A larger and lovely head in sanguine is perceivable at the extreme upper right; it appears to be a study for the head of the Madonna.

<sup>10</sup>F. Arcangeli in *Maestri della Pittura del Seicento Emiliano* (Exhibition Catalogue), 1959, p. 54.

<sup>11</sup>Graziani's list of Cesi's drawings in this repository does not include any connected with the S. Giacomo altarpiece. *Op. cit.*, pp. 94-95.

<sup>12</sup>Sepia, pen and wash, heightened with white lead, which has uniformly darkened, and even rusted, in several areas, 13" x 11". Los Angeles County Museum, P. 334.59-2. Squared for transfer. Inscribed SR at lower right, and with the name Salvatore Rosa on the front of the old mount.

<sup>13</sup>It is interesting that a parallel theme, so to speak, *The Omen of the Greatness of Augustus*, derived from Suetonius, appears in a drawing by Giulio Romano at Windsor Castle (Catalogue No. 350, Fig. 78, *The Italian Drawings of the XV and XVI Centuries . . . at Windsor Castle*, 1949).

<sup>14</sup>E. Mâle, *L'Art Religieux de la Fin du Moyen Age en France*, 1922, p. 236.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 255 and note 4.

<sup>17</sup>Parmigianino, escaping from the Sack of Rome, was in Bologna from 1527 to 1530/31. As he was robbed of his drawings in that city by Antonio da Trento, the drawing for this chiaroscuro must have been made sometime in 1528 (the year of Peruzzi's fresco in Siena) or after, since da Trento, as recorded in Vasari, cut the print. It is not known exactly when da Trento fled from Bologna. Popham refers to still another drawing on wood by Parmigianino, *The Cumaean Sibyl and Octavian*, which da Trento stole, but apparently never cut (*The Drawings of Parmigianino*, 1953, pp. 47-48.)

<sup>18</sup>Denis Calvaert (1540/45-1619), the Fleming who established the first art academy in Bologna, used Parmigianino's prints for instruction (Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* . . . I, 1841, p. 199.)

<sup>19</sup>See *The Italian Drawings of the XV and XVI Centuries* . . . at Windsor Castle (1949), No. 52, p. 184 and Fig. 19.

<sup>20</sup>G. Lebel in "Antoine Caron," in *L'Amour de l'Art* (1937), pp. 317-25, reproduces a School of Fontainebleau woodcut reversed from Parmigianino's chiaroscuro, to show its influence upon Caron's painting, but wrongly ascribes the chiaroscuro to the manner of Niccolò dell'Abbate.

<sup>21</sup>According to information kindly supplied by C. Virch the drawing is attributed by Philip Pouncey to Bartolomeo Neroni (Riccio) (d. 1571.) It has the same curious feature found in Giulio Romano's late drawing of the same subject, in the Ellesmere collection, the Emperor treading on the Sibyl's foot (See F. Hartt, *Giulio Romano*, 1958, II, Fig. 511.)

<sup>22</sup>Mâle, *op. cit.*, p. 255 note 5.

<sup>23</sup>Two repetitions exist of this work, one in the Museum of Nancy, the other in the Ringling Museum, Sarasota.

<sup>24</sup>In Pietro da Cortona's drawing of the subject, at Windsor Castle, there are several soldiers, but no encampment. Instead, lightly sketched columns are perceivable in the left background.

<sup>25</sup>The variable iconography of the subject found it more simply represented in Italian than in French art. Antoine Caron, for example, following a French mystery play of about 1400, introduced several details surrounding the revelation, including the miraculous fountain running oil. This occurrence is also described in the *Légende Dorée*. According to the latter, as well as to the mediaeval mystery, the revelation took place in a room in Augustus' palace. This particular detail is nowhere followed, all representations showing the scene outdoors, in most cases, on the Capitol. Parmigianino's composition, aside from G. M. Falconetto's archaistic picture in the Museo Civico, Verona, and Tintoretto's simplified treatment, in the S. Anna painting, is actually the least detailed of all, Augustus shown with only two attendants.

<sup>26</sup>Reproduced, *Cronache d'Arte* (September 1926), p. 267 Fig. 13.

<sup>27</sup>Sepia, pen and wash, 11½" x 8½". Los Angeles County Museum, P. 291 57-1.

<sup>28</sup>Catalogue No. 242, PL. LXXV.



#### A FURTHER NOTE ON DELACROIX'S STUDY AFTER RUBENS

The preceding number of this *Bulletin* (Vol. 10, Number 2, 1958) contained an article illustrating and discussing one of the Museum's important recent acquisitions, Eugene Delacroix's study after Peter Paul Rubens' *Henry IV Conferring the Regency upon Marie de Medici*. While that article was going to press, the author was in Paris where he was fortunate enough to have a very enjoyable experience that throws further light on our recently acquired Delacroix.

During an afternoon visit to the home of Mme. Ernest Rouart the present writer found

himself surrounded by dozens of masterpieces by such artists as Manet, Degas, Renoir and Berthe Morisot who was Mme. Rouart's mother. The house, on Rue Paul Valéry, was built for Berthe Morisot and her husband, Eugène Manet. In these surroundings the conversation with the lady of the house, now over 80 years of age, was like being transported back into the years when the great impressionists were alive and working. Each picture evoked a host of fascinating personal memories.

Some of the pictures were copies by the impressionists of various old masters in the Louvre, and Mme. Rouart delighted in emphasizing how important these were to the artists she had known. When she was told that the museum in Los Angeles had just acquired a study after Rubens by Delacroix, and that it had once been in the collection of her friend Degas, her face lit up, and, with questioning gestures, she began to describe our picture. When certain identity of the painting had been established, Mme. Rouart remembered it well in Degas' house, and she spoke of the respect and importance with which the impressionists regarded it. Thus the presence of our picture in Degas' collection, and the aesthetic value he and his fellow artists attached to it, were verified.

RICHARD F. BROWN

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